

**Joke:** There was a small village where everyone lived in grass huts.

In the middle of the village stood the biggest hut which belonged to the village chief and his family.

During the day, the chief sat in his throne which took up most of the space in his family's hut.

At night, the chief would secure the throne to the roof of the hut so that he and his family could sleep.

One night, the roof of the chief's hut gave way to the enormous throne.

The throne fell and landed on the chief and his family, killing them.

The village mourned the loss of their beloved chief, but they all took a valuable lesson away from this is the moral of the story.

People who live in grass houses shouldn't stow thrones.

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## **Treasure**

When someone says, "I'm going to speak some truth to you," what's the first thing that pops in to your head? That phrase is usually interpreted as something bad is coming? Well, I am going to speak some truth to you today.

No need to buckle up you don't need to brace yourselves it's not a truth that says something bad is about to happen.

The truth is. . .God is for us not against us. And He is always for our healing and well-being.

I love what John's gospel says, it tells us that the truth sets us free.

And honestly, we need the truth of God because we live with so many half-truths or flat-out lies in our heads. The enemy definitely, but also sometimes our friends, our teachers, and even some family members have said things that have struck with you and too many of us have believed what they said as truth.

But the truth is, God's truth clears the windshield so that we can see clearly.

And here's the truth I want to speak to you today: you have the life of Jesus dwelling inside of you.

You have the very presence of the living Christ within you if you are a follower of Jesus. And this life of Jesus does not leave you it doesn't abandon you, even when you sin or make terrible mistakes in that moment of weakness.

Let me say this before I get to the message. You and I need to settle in our hearts that when we wake up in the morning you are who God has said you are, not what what others have said. You

need to understand that you are accepted and God doesn't abandon you even if you sin. . .

Even if. . .Not when and that is a huge distinction.

Watch this. . .

1 John 2:1–2 (NIV): My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

John is saying I write this to you so that you will not sin. But even if not when. . .even if I stumble.

He's saying the power of grace gives you the ability to walk in righteousness, to walk in the light because He is the light.

I preached just a few weeks ago that in Romans it tells us to count yourself dead to sin and alive to God. And here's another truth for you. Righteousness will produce its fruit to holiness?

When you realize who you are because of whose you are it causes you to walk differently.

And church when I wake up in the morning I'm still His son. I'm accepted, I'm clean in His sight. I'm the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. My identity is in Him, I'm empowered and ready to start my day with my life in Christ.

And honestly Church, the last thing on my mind is sin. Why would I want it. Because as I just mentioned righteousness produces fruit towards holiness. And God tells me I am righteous.

Here's the thing church, in grace God enables, in law He requires.

And our behavior flows from out of identity and. . .

Since my identity is found in Him. My behavior flows from that. You and I have the life of Jesus dwelling inside of us. And it is of utmost importance that you understand that truth.

Because your different on the inside, you can live differently on the outside. God made you new so you can walk in newness of life.

So, let's look at 2 Corinthians where Paul compares himself to a fragile, easily-broken jar of clay, and compares the presence of Jesus within Him to a beautiful treasure.

2 Corinthians 4:5–12 (NIV): For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 10 We always carry around in our body the death of

Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.  
11 For we who are alive are always being given over to death for  
Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal  
body. 12 So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

I want to give you three points from this passage. Notice that  
there is no specific command to obey in these verses. Paul  
doesn't say do this to get this.

Paul is simply describing what God is doing, and then explaining  
how that's playing out in the lives of disciples like himself.

Point number one is. . .

#### 1. God does not curse the darkness

Paul says, "For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness,"  
made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the  
knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ"

God shines his light into the darkness but not just the darkness of  
the world, God also shines his light. . .where? "In our hearts"! I  
love that God shines his light into our own darkness.

Someone once said, "It is better to light a candle than curse the  
darkness."

So think about this:

- Instead of cursing the darkness in your heart, God shines his  
light into it.

- Instead of cursing the darkness of the world, God sent his Son into the world to save it and not condemn it.

A lighthouse keeper during a terrible storm, works hard throughout the night to make sure the light stayed on to guide ships safely to shore. Despite all of the darkness and the danger, the keeper's focus was on shining the light, not cursing the storm.

I wonder how many storms we have cursed.

In Luke 7 Jesus is at the table of a Pharisee sharing a meal.

Let's look at it a second.

Luke 7:36–50 (NIV): When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. 37 A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. 38 As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. 39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner." 40 Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. 41 "Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said. 44 Then he turned toward the woman and

said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. 47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.” 48 Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” 49 The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” 50 Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

So often we look at what’s happening in our culture and we curse it instead of shining the light of Christ in it.

Jesus didn’t curse the woman, he was actually harder on the Pharisee the one that knew the law.

Let me ask you this, what were you like when you first got saved? Did you have all your theology correct? Did you have all the Scriptures figured out? Of course not. . .we still don’t. You just came to God and said, God here I am a jar of clay, ok maybe not those words, but you get the idea.

It was simply if want me, here I am and God forgave you. He shined His light in the darkness of your heart and told you that you are His.

And listen church when we forget about our forgiveness, we end up thinking we’re the sum total of what we’ve done. And the truth

is your not the sum total of what we've done. You're the sum total of what He's done.

God does not curse the darkness. He shines the light of Christ into it.

Paul goes on to saying in 2 Corinthians that Jesus is Lord.

He said. . .

“For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake”

The word, Lord, meant “absolute authority.”

So, to call Jesus “Lord” had serious consequences. In Paul's day, only Caesar was called Lord. Caesar was the absolute authority in the Roman world, no one else.

To call Jesus “Lord” meant you were proclaiming Jesus to have more authority than Caesar. That was treason.

Jesus is Lord, says Paul.

Church let me ask you Is Jesus the Lord of your life? He wants to be, if He is then He is the one with absolute authority? But are you truly letting him rule?

The second point that Paul brings up is that we have a . . .

2. Treasure in jars of clay

2 Corinthians 4:7–9 (NIV): But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

When people win the lottery what are usually the first two questions they are asked? Let me make it a little more personal. If a friend of yours won \$5 Million in the lottery, what are the first two questions you'd ask them?

I think most of us would probably ask:

1. What are you going to do with all that money?

And then. . .and this would be especially true if it was a family member who won, but the second would be. . .

2. Can I have some of it!?

I'm not sure what In you want my plan would be with \$5 Million? And who wouldn't want to share? There's a little sarcasm in that by the way.

Here's the thing. Paul describes the presence of Christ in his life as a "treasure in a jar of clay." Treasure is something valuable and priceless. This is how he thought of the presence of Christ.

And in the kingdom of God, the question isn't, "What will I do with this treasure?" But instead the question should be, "What will this treasure do with me?"

God has a plan for your life. He gave you the treasure so that you could walk in your destiny.

If you are a follower of Jesus, you have the presence of Christ in your life right now. You have the same treasure in a jar of clay.

When we came to Jesus our lives were broken, and God didn't curse our brokenness, or our mess. He didn't curse our darkness or our sin. He placed inside of us a treasure beyond understanding: the very presence of God.

Have you ever heard of the Japanese art of Kintsugi, it's where broken pottery is repaired with gold, making the piece more beautiful and valuable than when it was first made?

**Show pictures of Kintsugi art 4 total.**

Rather than trying to hide the damage, Kintsugi highlights the repair. The imperfections are what make it beautiful and valuable.

And like Kintsugi, God's power and beauty is revealed as he makes us vessels of His grace and glory!

We all will experience pain, and brokenness and the enemy will say you're broken to be used, but like Kintsugi God will use your pain, your experience, your situation, and He will transform it into something beautiful and valuable.

What was Jesus doing with Paul? Paul writes, "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed"

Paul was saying I'm going through some stuff but His Grace is sufficient. God is still for me not against me.

What is Jesus doing with you? Right now you might feel pressed in on every side, but I want you to know God has not and will not abandon you. God can and will work it out for your good and His glory.

The last point is this. . .

3. God demonstrates the power of Jesus' resurrection through us

Paul continues,

2 Corinthians 4:10–12 (NIV): We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. 11 For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. 12 So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

The life of Jesus inside of us, not only gives us hope and eternal life, but actually becomes visible to others through the way we respond to circumstances and how we endure our hardships and trials.

God loves to demonstrate the power of Jesus' resurrection through normal, average people like you and me!

1 Corinthians 1:26–28 (NLT): Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. 27 Instead, God chose things

the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. 28 God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important.

Just as Jesus died and was resurrected, we also died to our old self and all of those old destructive habits we had, and we became a new creation, with a new heart. And that allows us to experience a true resurrection that brings us into new life.

Let me ask you: When you endure suffering and hardship, when it seems like all of hell is coming against you and your in a situation that seems impossible, is your life response marked by love, humility, and courage? If so, that is a witness to the world!

Because of what what Jesus has done in us, expressing Jesus through our life is our new heart's desire and our destiny.

Listen people can't see the invisible God, but you and I are the visible reflection of His love.

I heard something this week let me share I'm not who sure who said it but it went like this. Culture says fall in love, God says walk in love. How many of you know everything that falls breaks. But everything that grows becomes stronger. The culture says love is a feeling, Gods's word says love is a choice, it's a willing. The culture says marry the person that you love, God says love the person that you marry. The culture says if you find the right person you'll be happy. God's word says if your gonna be the right person you'll be happier.

So church let's shine and not just curse the darkness, let's love like He loved so that others might come to know His grace and encounter Jesus because of the treasure that you have become.

Let me close with this.

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It's by His grace that you are what you are.